

Resilience and Risk Reduction

Comprehensive Resilience Module Emotional Dimension

“What Good Are Negative Emotions”

Supporting a Resilient and Ready Force

The Value of Negative Emotions

“Negative emotions are great teachers”

- ❑ It draws your focus to something you believe you need to pay attention to
- ❑ Provide clues about what is important to you and how you see the world

“As a result, you learn about yourself”



This can:

- ❑ Influences how you act or choices you make
- ❑ Shape future decisions



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The Value of Negative Emotions

Negative Emotions can shock people into action

- ☐ Negative emotions are not the enemy, they are perfectly normal and realistic
- ☐ We focus on and get worked up over things that out of our control (*gratuitous negativity*)
- ☐ Negativity can be prolonged by distorted thinking (prolonged negativity)



Your Goals for this module:

- ☐ Learn to avoid or minimize instances of gratuitous negativity
- ☐ Realistically respond when negative emotions do arise

What are Negative Emotions

Common Negative Emotions:

Anger	Fear	Guilt
Shame	Sadness	Envy / jealousy
Embarrassment	Contempt	Disgust



- ☐ Negative emotions happen in situations where something gets in the way of what we want
- ☐ Keeping the negative emotions to a minimum is a good idea
- ☐ But, eliminating them from your life is impossible, impractical and actually not good for you



What Do Negative Emotions Do?



Anger	Fear	Guilt
Shame	Sadness	Envy / Jealousy
Disgust	Embarrassment	Contempt

Negative Emotions

Think of them as "problem solvers."

- If you have an emotional response you interpreted a situation in a specific way

They draw your attention to situations that

- You see as a problem to be solved at that moment.

Your view of the situation;

- Can be influenced by many factors including reality or expectations



People often remember the emotion before the event.

An emotion is a momentary reaction from a specific situation that changes the way we feel, drawing our attention and coordinating our response.

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What Do Negative Emotions DO?

Emotion	Thoughts	What it Signals
Anger towards someone	That person's behavior toward you was demeaning or offensive	You need to figure out how to get back on track
Afraid / Worried	Your life is in danger	You need to figure out how to avoid the negative outcomes that you anticipate
Sad /Disappointment	You lost something Important	You need to take stock of the loss and regroup
Embarrassed	You did something that made you look relatively foolish in front of people	You need to repair the image that these other people have of you

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What Do Negative Emotions Do?

Without	You would Not...
Anger towards someone	Be aware that you care about the particular goal that got blocked
Afraid /Worried	Register the threat to your life
Sadness /Disappointment	Be prompted to find new resources
Embarrassment	Be reminded to stay in the good graces of people you respect

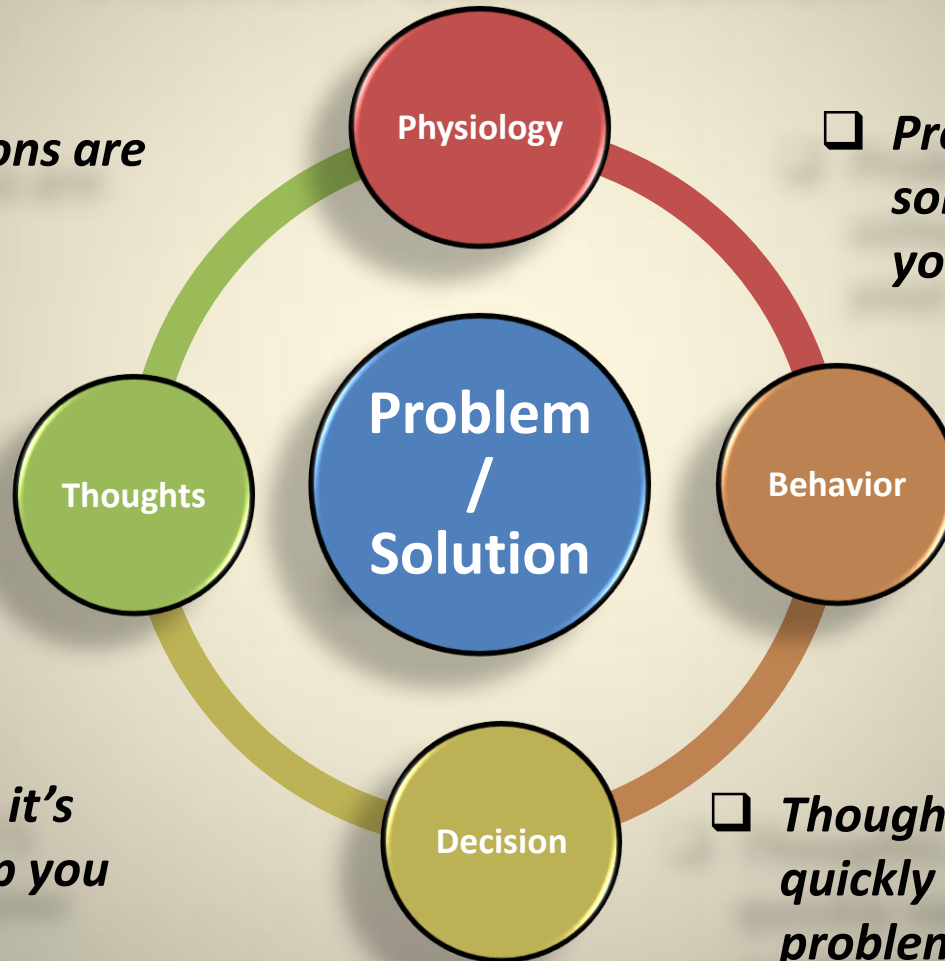


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The Body, Thought, Action Connection

☐ *Negative emotions are fast acting*

☐ *Problems need to be solved quickly and your body knows it*






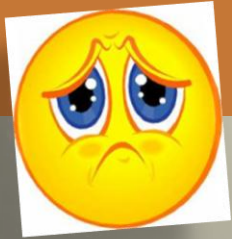

☐ *Body recognizes it's resources to help you*

☐ *Thoughts and attention quickly narrows in on the problem at hand*



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The Body, Thought, Action Connection

	Body	Mind	Behavior
Anger 	Body is poised for action , your face flushes.	“What a jerk! He knows that wasn’t true, and made me look like an idiot in front of my friends!”	You might lash out at the offender. 
Embarrassment 	Face flushes to signal to others that you recognize your social blunder.	“I can’t believe I said that to her. I have to make sure she knows I know better than that!”	You might quickly apologize and try to explain your behavior.
Sadness 	Your eyes well up in sadness to help calm you after a loss.	“What am I going to do now?”	You might withdraw in order to regroup. 

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Importance of Acknowledging Negative Emotions

- ☐ Speed of the response
- ☐ Negative emotions produce bad outcomes



- ☐ Some ignore or pretend they don't exist

- ☐ Acknowledging them can be helpful
- ☐ Distract yourself
- ☐ Relax your muscles
- ☐ Actively see the situation in a different light



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Importance of Acknowledging Negative Emotions

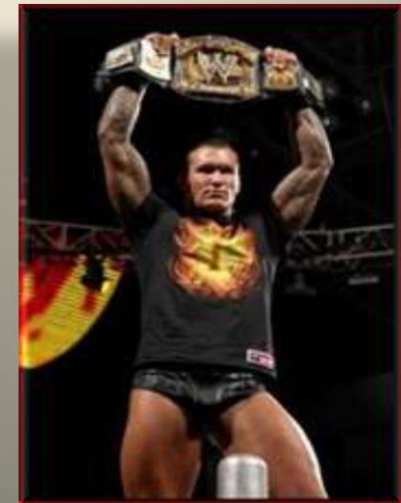
Emotional response gives you information about what you think is important at the time

Acknowledging your emotional response

- ☐ Does not require that you take action
- ☐ Does allow you to notice a pattern of gratuitous negativity in your life

Gratuitous Negativity:

- ☐ Can accumulate and linger
- ☐ Take resources to deal with and it's tiring
- ☐ Minimizing frequency and impact allows you to have more resources to handle the big things



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Recognizing Gratuitous Negativity

Start learning what is Important to you by noticing:

- ☐ When you have negative emotions
- ☐ The situations that trigger them



You can:

- ☐ Change your expectations about situations
- ☐ Choose to engage in different behaviors
- ☐ Take an active role in your emotional life
- ☐ Reclaim time and energy lost to negativity



“Strengthen your resilience and get more out of life”

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What Do I Do With The Emotion?

Distinguish gratuitous negativity from non-gratuitous?

Once you acknowledge the emotion, ask yourself:

- ☐ Is it really important?
- ☐ Am I sure it's important?
- ☐ Why is it important?
- ☐ What if I am wrong?
- ☐ What if I did not think that this was such a bad thing? How would my life be different right now?
- ☐ What would it feel like if I had not had that thought about the situation?



Tips For Recognizing Gratuitous Negativity

Situation	Emotional Response	Rating (1-7)
1. You think someone intentionally cut you off in traffic		
2. Your boss assigned you the work task		
3. A Soldier makes a joke at your expense in front of your Commander		
4. Your date cancels on you at the last minute saying "something came up"		
5. You forgot to pay your bill on time.		

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- ❑ Create a pervasive blanket of feelings
- ❑ Can distort thinking

- ☐ a.) stop gratuitous negativity because it's not helping
- ☐ make the most of the information you gained having the negative emotion.
- ☐ b.) to be able to spot the distorted thinking so that you can predict future emotional trouble.

Take Away

- First of all, negative emotion does not mean you have a mood disorder.



- Rather negative emotions can be good for you because they can help you solve problems.



- However, its important to remember that prolonged or gratuitous negative thinking is not beneficial.

Questions?

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